



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

vidual, but not, he believed, speaking sentiments alien to those of the statesmen with whom he had the honour to be associated, if he said to Captain Osborn that with all their hearts they bid him "God speed." They were sure the name and fame of our country were safe in his hands, and they trusted and believed that when it pleased God he should come back amongst us, he would come back with a great accession to his personal fame and celebrity, and also with the credit and honour of having added to the character of England in that distant quarter of the globe.

The President then adjourned the meeting to the 12th of January, 1863.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *Progress Report of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria for 1861.*

THE Exploration Committee, in submitting their Annual Report, deem it sufficient to sketch merely in brief outline the main incidents which characterised the Victorian Expedition during the year. The glorious achievements, the severe sufferings, and the mournful losses, of the explorers caused universal admiration, anxiety, and grief, and have been recorded already so fully, and discussed so frequently in all their bearings, as to render their repetition now unnecessary.

It was stated in the report of the Committee for 1860 that the expedition had reached Menindie amply provided, and without any unusual difficulty.

The final departure of Mr. Robert O'Hara Burke (the leader), with the advance party from the Darling, took place on the 19th October, 1860. At Torowotto, on the 29th October, Mr. Wright, who accompanied him so far, left and returned to the Darling with the view of conducting the remainder of the expedition to Cooper Creek.

Mr. Wright reached Menindie on the 5th November, and on the 3rd December intelligence of his appointment as third officer and return to Menindie was received in Melbourne. The Committee considering the instructions originally given, ample to provide for any additional requirements which in distant parts of the country might be found needful, and believing that no letter through the ordinary channel could arrive at Menindie previous to Mr. Wright's departure, did not attempt to communicate with him regarding the expedition, at a distance of about 400 miles, as practically beyond their control.

On the particulars of Stuart's route reaching Melbourne, a despatch was forwarded conveying the intelligence to Burke. The disasters which befel the bearers of this despatch involved the necessity of affording them relief, and obliged Mr. Wright afterwards to reorganise his party. Mr. Wright finally left Menindie on the 27th January, and it is needless to recapitulate the difficulties which at a season so unfavourable were encountered by him in crossing the desert intervening between the Darling and Cooper Creek; those difficulties being much aggravated by scurvy, which prostrated several members of the party, and under which the scientific and enthusiastic Becker and his associates (Stone and Purcell) succumbed.

Whilst Mr. Wright and his companions were suffering from difficulties of no ordinary character, Burke and Wills, accompanied by King and Gray,

penetrated with rapidity to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and performed, in crossing the continent from south to north, an exploit so brilliant as to have few parallels in the annals of geographical discovery.

On the 16th December they set out from Cooper Creek, leaving Mr. Brahe, with three others, in charge of the dépôt. After reaching the estuary of the Flinders River on the 4th February, they deemed it preferable to return on their own track, rather than avail themselves of the ready means of reaching the Burdekin settlements; induced to this decision possibly by a desire to relieve as early as practicable their companions at the dépôt.

The return could not, however, be effected within the time originally estimated by Burke, and, through a most remarkable and deplorable accident, the dépôt party quitted Cooper Creek on the very day (21st April, 1861) on which, exhausted from exertions and privations, Burke, Wills, and King returned; Gray having died on the journey, apparently from exhaustion, induced by scurvy.

Burke, Wills, and King, supposing that they in their weak state could not overtake the men who had just left the dépôt, determined to rest, and proceed towards South Australia. By a mortifying series of disasters the explorers failed to reach any of the settlements towards Mount Hopeless, although they approached to within less than 60 miles of some of the stations. The unfortunate travellers were moreover missed by Mr. Wright and Mr. Brahe, who, on the 8th May, visited Cooper Creek from the camp at Koorliatto, but failed to observe any marks above the *câche* there, and therefore believed that it had not been touched. Accordingly they at once went back to their camp, as in their opinion the precarious condition of some of the members of their party demanded a speedy return to the settled districts.

Burke and Wills, after displaying the most heroic fortitude, fell under the privations to which they were exposed, and died, the former on the 28th, and the latter about the 26th June.

Meanwhile the Committee, anxious to receive intelligence of the explorers, held a meeting on the 13th of June, and fitted out a light party, under the leadership of Mr. Alfred William Howitt, to obtain news of the expedition, and, if necessary, convey succour to it. On his way to Cooper Creek, Mr. Howitt met Mr. Brahe, near Swan Hill, and returned to Melbourne with him, in order to receive further instructions, rendered requisite by the information obtained from Mr. Brahe. Mr. Howitt's party, having been reinforced to meet the emergencies of the case, immediately proceeded to Cooper Creek, and was successful in relieving King, who after most praiseworthy attention and devotion to his dying companions, was supported by the natives with a kindness and solicitude which should never be forgotten in our future dealings with the aborigines. The journals of the explorers, preserved by King, were saved and rendered available.

The Committee, on the arrival of Mr. Brahe in Melbourne, represented to the Government the desirability that nothing which could tend to afford relief to the missing party should be left undone, and the sanction of the Government was accordingly obtained for a search, by Commander Norman, in H.M.C.S.S. *Victoria*, along the north coast. Arrangements were also effected by the Committee, under the supervision and with the aid of the Queensland Government, for organizing a land-party under Mr. Landsborough, with the view of co-operating with the expedition by sea.

Furthermore, under the apparent urgency of the case, the Committee were induced to engage the services of Mr. Walker and his aborigines to search for any traces of the explorers between Rockhampton and the Gulf of Carpentaria, in case they should have returned, as might have been expected, by that route.

The *Firefly*, conveying Mr. Landsborough and his party, was unfortunately wrecked at Sir Charles Hardy's Group, but with no further loss than two

horses, and, through the aid of Commander Norman and crew of H.M.C.S.S. *Victoria*, the party finally reached the gulf shores, and formed a depôt on the Albert River.

Mr. Walker, on his way overland from Rockhampton, having struck Burke's tracks, on the Flinders River, came, in accordance with previous arrangement, to the rendezvous, and there obtained from Commander Norman the supplies necessary to enable him to follow up those tracks. Mr. Landsborough, pursuing the instructions furnished to him by the Committee, instituted a search for 200 miles south-west from the Albert, and was compelled from want of water to return to the depôt. Another party was organised by the South-Australian Government, under the command of Mr. M'Kinlay, with a view of searching the northern districts of South Australia, for the possible relief of the Victorian Expedition.

Finally, to perfect all arrangements, the Committee caused Mr. Howitt to renew his journey to Cooper Creek, for the purpose of re-establishing the depôt there, and maintaining it so long as the northern search-parties might stand in need of succour. On that officer devolves also the mournful duty of conveying, in compliance with a unanimous vote of the Legislative Assembly, the remains of the fallen leaders of the expedition to an undisturbed and honoured resting-place in the metropolis.

The exertions of the brave men now in the field for the purpose of conveying relief can be of no avail; nevertheless the Committee reflect with gratification on the prospect of these exertions tending to augment the geographical knowledge of the continent which we inhabit, and to promote the expansion of science, and the progress of civilisation and peaceful settlement. They refer, with no small degree of satisfaction, to the fact that the explorers of the Victorian Expedition have been the means of opening a path from the southern settlements to the northern shores, which they hope will, at no distant day, be made available for telegraphic communication, by way of Batavia and India, with the mother country; and they rejoice that now, through a broad belt of fertile land, a connexion has been established between the discoveries of Leichhardt on the Burdekin, those of Burke towards Carpentaria, of Stuart towards Arnheim Land, of Augustus Gregory towards North-Western Australia, and thence by the route of Francis Gregory to the northern tracts of Western Australia.

The important services rendered by King, the sole survivor of the ill-fated expedition, have not been overlooked by your Committee. From the date of Burke's death, in June, to the end of the year, a salary equal to that of the leader has been paid to him.

The Committee have also recommended him to the favourable consideration of the Government, and they have learned with much pleasure that it is the intention of the Government to apply to Parliament to grant him an annuity of 180*l*.

King has not as yet, your Committee regret to state, recovered his health, but it is pleasing to know that the sufferings and privations which he so heroically endured have in no respect lessened his zeal in the cause of exploration.

Your Committee have further the gratification to record that the Government have placed the sum of 4000*l*. on the Estimates, towards the erection of a suitable monument to the memory of Burke and Wills, this sum to be conditionally granted on the additional sum of 2000*l*. being raised by public subscription for the same object; and they would strongly urge on the members of the Royal Society to aid as far as possible any public measures that may be adopted for this purpose.

Your Committee have had the satisfaction of receiving Commander Norman, on the return from Carpentaria of the *Victoria*, after a very successful cruise, the results of which are now before the Society. The Committee are advised

of despatches from Mr. Howitt, dating from Mount Hopeless, to which place he had, in pursuance of instructions, paid a flying visit. On the receipt of these despatches, your Committee will promptly make such arrangements as may be necessary to provide for the possibility of Mr. Landsborough's party reaching Cooper Creek. They left Carpentaria two months after the departure of Mr. Walker, being provisioned for four months with supplies from the *Victoria*.

Having thus submitted a short narrative of the leading events of the past year, your Committee do not wish to conceal from themselves that their conduct, in connexion with the disasters which befel the Expedition, has been censured both by the public and by the Royal Commission which was appointed to inquire into the cause of these misfortunes.

The Victorian Expedition, though crowned with success as regards the extent and value of the country explored, having proved disastrous to human life, your Committee were fully prepared for that condemnation by the unreflecting public which invariably awaits the originators of enterprises similarly unfortunate. Anxious for the fullest investigation, your Committee hailed with satisfaction the appointment of the Royal Commission; and, while they freely admit that that body conducted its investigations with ability and impartiality, they confess they were scarcely prepared for the very grave censure which is conveyed in its Report.

While, therefore, your Committee believe that they are in a position fully to justify their own conduct, they feel that they are precluded from reviewing the Report of the Commission, constituted as it was, and they would prefer silently to submit to unmerited obloquy, rather than reflect on the memory of the lamented leader.

In justice, however, to themselves, as well as to the Society by whom they have been appointed, they are constrained briefly to express their own views as to the causes which led to such unfortunate results.

The fundamental principle which guided your Committee in all their arrangements was the formation of a safe base of operations by establishing a permanent depôt at Cooper Creek, and securing a communication therefrom with the settled districts.

According to instructions, all the efforts of the expedition ought in the first instance to have been directed to effect this important object. It has, therefore, been a source of great regret to your Committee that, in the ardour of his zeal to reach the goal of his ambition, the leader entrusted to others the equipment and stores which should have been taken up to Cooper Creek by himself. This and this alone, your Committee regard as the primary cause of all the calamities which followed.

Mr. Wright failed to reach Cooper Creek in time to relieve Mr. Brahe's party, not solely because he was too late in leaving Menindie, but mainly because he could not find his way there.

In his journal, dated 3rd April, Koorliatto, he says that he resolved on the following day to push on to Bulloo, which "from his northern position he conjectured would be Cooper Creek." From Koorliatto to Bulloo, a distance of 20 miles, Burke's track pursued a course some few degrees to the east of north. In places it was hardly perceptible, but no difficulty was found in regaining it. On arriving at Bulloo, no traces could be found of the advance party having camped there. Beyond Bulloo, which is described as a large "sheet of water extending some five miles to the north, the plains became extremely stony, and the track, turning rapidly to the west, completely obliterated."

From the absence of any certain indication that the leader had changed his route to the westward at this point, Mr. Wright felt convinced that Cooper Creek lay still further in advance, and he made two attempts, one north-

east and the other north-west, for the purpose of tracing the course of the track.

It is obvious, therefore, that Mr. Wright never could have reached Cooper Creek, even if he had followed up the leader immediately, as he was expected to do.

From Bulloo a west-north-west course was taken to Cooper Creek; this it was impossible for Mr. Wright to have discovered except from the tracks, which, unfortunately, from the extremely stony character of the plains, became obliterated at this very point: without them, and unacquainted as he was with surveying, it was impossible for him either to follow the party or ascertain where Cooper Creek lay.

The Committee regret that on their leaving Bulloo their instructions "that their route should be marked as permanently as possible, by leaving records, sowing seeds, building cairns, and marking trees at as many points as possible, consistently with the various other duties," were not observed.

Great allowances have been made for Mr. Brahe leaving the *dépôt* at Cooper Creek, "because a responsibility far beyond his expectations devolved upon him." Your Committee are of opinion that similar allowances, though perhaps in a less degree, might have been extended to Mr. Wright, because, in accepting the command to convey the remainder of the party from Menindie to Cooper Creek, without any surveying knowledge to guide him, he was justified in expecting either that no great deviation would be made from a direct route between those places, or that such deviation would be sufficiently indicated in some conspicuous manner. Had Mr. Wright, on his arrival at Bulloo on the 4th April, exactly known his position and the distance from Cooper Creek, there is no doubt that at all hazards he would have conveyed his party there. On the 3rd April, in his journal, he expresses his anxiety and his determination to move forward, because "he feared Mr. Burke's stores acquired replenishment, and that any party left at Cooper Creek would be anxiously expecting his arrival." At this date the sick (Becker, Stone, and Purcell) were quite capable of being moved forward to Cooper Creek, a distance of 80 miles; and even had they been unequal to the journey, there was nothing to prevent Mr. Wright, who is admitted to be an experienced bushman, if he had known the direction in which Cooper Creek lay, pushing on there by himself, and communicating with the *dépôt* party.

Reassured by the proximity of Mr. Wright's party at Bulloo, with medical aid and an ample supply of stores and equipments, your Committee cannot doubt that Brahe would have gladly held out for a longer period at the *dépôt*.

Your Committee are not conscious of having justly laid themselves open to censure for omitting to urge Mr. Wright's departure from the Darling, sensible though they are of the error he committed in lingering there so long.

Mr. Wright returned to Menindie from Torowotto on the 5th November, and Burke's despatch did not reach the Committee until the 3rd December. They were impressed with the belief that Mr. Wright, in following out his instructions, would leave Menindie as soon as he possibly could; this despatch, therefore, appeared to the Committee to require no action on their part. Mr. Wright had not communicated with them, and his omitting to do so was conclusive evidence to their minds that he wished for nothing, and required nothing from them. Believing, from the tenor of the despatch, that Mr. Wright had left Menindie for Cooper Creek before the despatch itself reached Melbourne, it was clearly unnecessary, in their opinion, to open any correspondence with that gentleman.

The Committee were in receipt, up to the 10th of December, of letters from Dr. Becker of various dates: the latest being the 28th November, one fortnight later than was expected, they could not by any legitimate reasoning arrive at the conclusion, that, because he had not left on the 28th of November, one fortnight later than was expected, he would con-

tinue at Menindie until the 21st of December, the earliest time at which a special messenger could have reached from Melbourne.

Your Committee intrusted the fullest authority to the leader; he appointed Mr. Wright; personally gave that officer definite instructions; and in his despatch to the Committee stated that if Mr. Wright was allowed to follow them out, he felt confident the result would prove satisfactory. So far from imagining that Mr. Wright, at a postal distance of 570 miles from Melbourne, required pressure to carry out instructions received from the leader himself, your Committee were under the impression that the less they interfered with such instructions the better; the more especially as these instructions, though referred to in the despatch, were not forwarded to, or seen by, your Committee. And they are confident that any other persons, not judging *ex post facto*, but placed in a like position, would have arrived at a like conclusion.

They will ever recur with painful memory to the saddening incidents which surrounded the death-scenes of Burke and Wills; and, worst of all, to the imputation that these brave explorers sank under the mortifying conviction that your Committee had faithlessly withdrawn from them that succour and support upon which, in the hour of their need and in the moment of victory, they had confidently relied; but, conscious that they have acted throughout with calm deliberation, and with the most anxious desire to secure the safety as well as the success of the Victorian Expedition, your Committee cannot admit that the disasters of that expedition are to be traced to any oversight on our part.

Pending the investigation of the Royal Commission, your Committee abstained from presenting at the usual period of the session the Report they have now the honour to submit.

WILLIAM F. STAWELL, Chairman.

2. *Extracts of Despatch from MR. LANDSBOROUGH to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Queensland, dated Bunnawannah, Darling River, June 1st, 1862.*

I do myself the honour to inform you that the expedition party under my command arrived here yesterday in safety and in good health.

Our route from the Gulf of Carpentaria, Mr. Gregory's route to South Australia, and the routes of other explorers, demonstrate the fact that sheep, cattle, and horses can be taken at a small cost and in the finest condition, from South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales, and the inland districts of Queensland, to stock the country near the Gulf of Carpentaria, or for exportation to India or elsewhere.

The road we came was so easy from the richness of the pasturage and the abundance of water, that a foal, named "Flinders" from his having been foaled on the Flinders River, followed his mother most bravely from the time he was a few hours old until his arrival here.

When we were on Gregory's route to South Australia, and for some time previously, we took many opportunities of inquiring from the blacks respecting the explorers they had seen. This we were enabled to do, as Jemmy, the native police-trooper, could speak their language. We learned from them that they had seen, during the last ten moons, explorers to the eastward, but that they had seen none with larger animals than horses.

I am sorry to have to inform you that our familiarity at last led to our having a hostile collision with them on the Barcoo River, near where the blacks attempted treacherously to take Mr. Gregory's party by surprise during the night. They tried to take us at night by surprise. If they had succeeded, they would, no doubt, have overpowered us; but it was during Jemmy's, the native trooper's, watch; and, as he always keeps his watch well, he woke us